

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims shall replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method
5 comprising the steps of:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing search

parameters descriptive of a product ~~or service~~;

retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing

third-party retail vendor product information;

10 transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing ~~dealers in the~~

retrieved product or service information and associated prices;

automatically providing the user with an option to play a game to win a selected

product ~~or service~~ from said product information without the user first

making any payment or requesting the option;

15 electronically calculating a probability of winning the selected product ~~or service~~

by the user;

electronically generating a pseudo-random outcome corresponding to the

calculated probability of winning; and

in response to a winning pseudo-random outcome, purchasing the selected

20 product ~~or service~~ for the user from the third-party retail vendor.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the probability of winning on successive plays of the game increases with the value derived from the user's interaction with the system.

5 3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the pseudo-random outcome is indicated by displaying a user-chosen number and a comparison number, such that a winning outcome is indicated by displaying a comparison number that matches the user-chosen number, and a losing outcome is indicated by displaying a comparison number that does not match the user-chosen number.

10 4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein an increased probability of winning on successive plays of the game is indicated by displaying a comparison number having at least one digit matching the corresponding at least one digit of the user-selected number.

15 5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the probability of winning is different than one divided by ten raised to the power of the number of digits in the comparison number.

20 6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising providing the user with an opportunity to increase the chances of winning by performing a task for which a third party provides compensation.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability of winning based on at least a current budget.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on a total number of game players.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

where:

P_a is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available;

P_t is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

P_m is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received;

P_u is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session; and

N is a number of current users.

10. (Currently amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search parameter descriptive of a product;

5 retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing third-party retail vendor product information;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing at a least one product, a price of the product and a third-party ~~dealer~~ retail vendor of the product;

10 automatically transmitting electronic signals representing at least a first option for the user to play a game to win the product without the user first making any payment or requesting the first option, and a second option to purchase the product;

if the user chooses to play the game:

15 electronically calculating a probability of winning the product by the user;
electronically generating a pseudo-random outcome corresponding to the calculated probability of winning; and

in response to a winning pseudo-random outcome, purchasing the product for the user from the third-party retail vendor; and

20 if the user chooses to purchase the product instead of playing the game:

directing the user to a web site which sells the product.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, comprising providing the user with an opportunity to increase the chances of winning on successive plays of the game by performing a task for which a third party provides compensation.

5 12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, comprising calculating a probability of winning based on at least a current budget.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on a total number of game players.

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14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

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where:

P_a is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available;

P_t is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

P_m is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received;

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P_u is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session;

and

N is a number of current users.

15. (Currently amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search parameter descriptive of a product;

5 retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing third-party retail vendor product information;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing a plurality of different ~~dealers~~ third-party retail vendors and associated prices charged by each of said different ~~dealers~~ third-party retail vendors for products identified in response to said at least one search parameter;

10 automatically transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing an option to play a game to win a selected one of said products without the user first making any payment or requesting the option; and

if the user chooses to play the game:

15 electronically calculating a probability of winning said selected one product by the user;

electronically generating a pseudo-random outcome corresponding to the calculated probability of winning; and

20 in response to a winning pseudo-random outcome, purchasing said selected one product from a corresponding ~~dealers~~ third-party retail vendor for the user.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, comprising providing the user with an opportunity to increase the chances of winning by performing a task for which a third party provides compensation.

5 17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, comprising calculating a probability of winning based on at least a current budget.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on a total number of game players.

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19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

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where:

P_a is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available;

P_t is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

P_m is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received;

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P_u is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session;
and

N is a number of current users.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the electronic signals representing the associated prices charged by each of said different dealers, represent the prices charged on said each of said different dealers' own web sites.

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21. (Currently amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search parameter descriptive of a product;

5 searching for products matching said at least one search parameter;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing a plurality of

~~dealers~~ third-party retail vendors and associated prices charged by each of said ~~dealers~~ third-party retail vendors for products identified in response to said at least one search parameter, each of the products identified being offered for sale on a corresponding web site of each ~~dealer~~ third-party retail vendor;

10 automatically transmitting electronic signals to the user representing an option to play a game to win a selected one of said products without the user first making any payment or requesting the option; and

15 if the user chooses to play the game:

electronically calculating a probability of winning said selected one product by the user;

electronically generating a pseudo-random outcome having a probability corresponding to the calculated probability of winning; and

20 in response to a winning pseudo-random outcome, purchasing said selected one product from a corresponding ~~dealer~~ third-party retail vendor for the user.

22. (Currently amended) A method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service by playing a game of chance without buying the product or service and without paying a fee to play, comprising the steps of:

enabling the user to submit a search query associated with a type of product or
5 service;

conducting a search in a database for a third-party retail vendor product or service
that satisfies the search query;

automatically presenting a result of the search to the user, including at least one
product or service offered for sale by said third-party retail vendor

10 retrieved from the database, along with an option to play the game;

enabling the user to select the product or service that he wants to win;

determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or service;

generating an outcome for each play of the game that corresponds to the user's
chance of winning; and

15 displaying the outcome of the game to the user.

23. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 further comprising the step of purchasing the selected product or service for the user if the outcome for the play of the game is a win.

20 24. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 further comprising the step of enabling the user to increase the chance of winning the selected product or service through repeated plays of the game.

25. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 wherein the step of determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or service is a function of at least one of a cost of the product or service, a number of other users playing to win the product or service concurrently, a current prize budget and an amount of funds received from an advertising sponsor.

26. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 25 wherein the advertising sponsor provides funds for the purchase of the selected product or service to a game provider as a payment for a display of an advertisement to the user during each play of the game.

27. (previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 25 wherein the step of determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or service is a function of the user's behavior during repeated plays of the game.

28. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 26 wherein the user's repeated plays of the game generates revenue from the advertising sponsor for a game provider which increases the user's chance of winning the selected product or service.

29. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 wherein the game of chance comprises displaying a number selected by the user along with the number generated to represent the outcome for each play of the game.

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30. (Previously presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 29 wherein the user can increase the probability of winning the product or service by participating in an online survey for an advertising sponsor.

10 31. (New) The method of Claim 1, further comprising collecting a database of third party retail vendor product information prior to receiving the search parameters from the user.

32. (New) The method of Claim 1 whereby transmitting electronic signal as representing product info and said automatically providing an option to play is by transmitting a
15 webpage containing at least a link to a webpage of the third party retail vendor and a link to initiate playing to win the same product.

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33. (New) A method for increasing user traffic to a search engine website, comprising:
receiving a search query from a user system interacting with a search webpage of the
website, the search query defining a desired product for the user; and
transmitting a results webpage to the user system, the results page including at least one
link for redirection to a third party vendor website where the user system can
interact with at least one webpage to purchase a corresponding product and
further including in the same webpage a play link corresponding to said third
party vendor link for redirection to a webpage which allows the user to play a
game of chance to win the product corresponding to the third party website
redirection link.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said play link webpage is provided by the search
engine website and wherein the search engine website calculates the outcome of the game
of chance for a user system selecting to play to win the product and further wherein if the
user outcome is favorable the search engine website facilitating the purchase of the
product from the third party vendor corresponding to the third party website redirection
link.

35. (New) A method for increasing user traffic to a search website, comprising:

providing a search webpage containing a search interface for a user to submit a search query for a product;

receiving a search query from a user employing said search webpage;

5 searching third party websites by reference to said query;

retrieving product information and corresponding price from said third party websites for at least one products satisfying said query;

providing a game of chance in response to a user selection of the link to win the product;

and purchasing the product from the third party for the user response to a

10 favorable outcome in said game;

transmitting at least one results webpage to the user, the results webpage including at least one link for the product information, a corresponding price, a link to the third party website, and a link to win the product;

providing a game of chance in response to a user selection of the link to win the product;

15 and

purchasing the product from the third party for the user in response to a favorable outcome in said game.

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36. (New) A product search website executing on a server storing a plurality of web pages, the website comprising:

a search page for a user submitting a query to the server for at least one product;

a results webpage transmitted to the user, the results page including links to third party

website and a link to a play webpage of the website;

a play webpage providing a game of chance for winning the product corresponding to a

selected play link from the results webpage; and

a product win webpage to indicate a favorable outcome in said game of chance for said product.